TERRE HAUTE STAR, SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1940

ymca

Community Affairs File

Terre Haute's New Y. M. C. A. Is a 'Dream Come True'

Terre Haute made two attempts to organize a Y. M. C. A. fifty years ago. One of these was made by members of the Washington Avenue Presbyterian Church and was headed by Dr. G. T. Ball, C. Bird King and Charles Ryan. This group met in the office of C. A. Orman at the southwest corner of Seventh Street and Rose Court. The other group, under the direction of J. D. Bigelow, W. H. Barnhart and Frank D. Blue, met in Bigelow's office on the opposite side of the street.

These movements seem to have started as early as 1889, but it was not until Dec. 1, 1892, that the group incorporated with the following directors: J. S. Talley, J. W. Landrum, J. R. Duncan, M. A. Hunt, W. H. Wiley, F. A. Reckert, R. H. Hollingsworth, C. B. King, M. H. Waters, J. A. Parker, W. H. Barnhart and H. P. Townley.

H. P. Townley was elected president; J. W. Landrum, treasurer, and W. H. Barnhart, secretary. The directors also chose C. B. Jamison general secretary and Fred Barnes, physical director.

A contract was made with Samuel T. Reese for a five-year lease on a building which was then under construction at the northeast corner of Seventh and Ohio streets. The Y. M. C. A. opened in this building on Dec. 20, 1802, with 350 members.

At the expiration of this lease Reese presented the building to the association under the condition that this gift be kept secret. However, the secret soon leaked out and William C. Ball of the Gazette wrote and published a glowing tribute to Reese. The property cost him $16.000 and was later sold by the association for $50,000.

Vote to Disband.

In 1902 the Terre Haute club voted to disband and sell their property. Talley and Jamison negotiated a loan of $5,000 from Demis Deming and bought the Terre Haute club property for the Y. M. C. A., with most of the stockholders in the club gladly donating their interests to the association. Talley then headed a subscription list to complete the payment on the property and to erect a new gym with a $5,000 donation. Charles W. Minshall and his sister subscribed $2,000, W. R. McKeen $1,000 and many others in smaller amounts. The building was completed and first occupied in 1903 and served for nearly thirty-five years as Y. M. C. A. headquarters. The building was repaired and remodeled in 1919, but the hard usage soon took its toll and in January, 1936, state authorities condemned and closed the building.

Many then thought the "Y" movement in Terre Haute was dead, but in 1936 some of the younger active members of the association, headed by Ross Harriott, who at that time was secretary of the board, held several open meetings to determine the future of the "Y." Lack of physical facilities had not killed the need nor the desire to serve the young men. The new 1936 board elected Ross Harriott president, paid off old bills and brought in a committee of three experts to make a survey of the needs for a "Y." Bert Modesitt, formerly of Terre Haute; Roy Sorenson of Chicago and B. A. Schnell of Indianapolis conducted an extensive survey in the Summer of 1936. This survey plainly showed the need for a Y. M. C. A. and the committee recommended purchasing a new site, employing a general secretary and several other things, all of which were duly carried out.

In March, 1937, the Deming Wheeler property at the corner of Sixth and Walnut streets was purchased. Deming Wheeler started a building fund with a $5,000 donation. Six candidates for the general secretaryship were interviewed and in May, 1937, William H. Mead of Youngstown, Ohio, was brought to Terre Haute to head the movement for a new building. Program and building committees were appointed, membership recruited, a new constitution and by-laws adopted and in September, 1937, additional directors and new officers were elected under the new constitution.

In January, 1938, with the campaign slogan, "For you, for youth, for Terre Haute," 500 of Terre Haute's leading citizens from every walk of life joined forces and put over one of the city's biggest civic projects, raising $260,000 in ten days.

The material result was the assurance of an adequate Y. M. C. A., a community center where all—regardless of religion, poverty or wealth—can meet for the common purpose of self-development and civic improvement.

Plans for the new building were prepared by Architects Miller & Yeager and were approved by the building committee and the "Y" board. The contracts were let and the actual building started last Fall.

The plans included the following features: A 25x75-foot swimming pool, a 50x80-foot gymnasium, boys' game room, social room, lockers, showers and club rooms, men's social rooms, lockers and clubrooms on the second floor. Several other features which the building committee and the board felt necessary were a business men's club, two handball courts, dormitory rooms, handicraft room, grille, clubrooms and a special exercise room.

The "Y" campaign was one of the very few successful capital account campaigns held in the country this year. It was a splendid demonstration of the fine spirit of co-operation shown by the citizens of Terre Haute. All elements in the city were behind the movement, as evidenced by the fact that the "Y" board is composed of Jews, Catholics and Protestants. Labor co-operated wonderfully in the campaign and is interested in the activities.

During the last year the "Y" developed into a real live force in the community. Even in temporary quarters the "Y" provided headquarters for the Terre Haute Recreation Department, the Greater Terre Haute Movement and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, as well as serving as a meeting place for many other groups and a coordinating agency for many community activities such as swimming events, golf leagues, Stadium softball, tennis tournaments, basketball leagues, etc.

The real story of the "Y" can be told only by the lives of the hundreds of boys and young men who have received their character training in this world wide character building agency. Sam Huffman, who has been in the active service of the Terre Haute "Y" for twenty-five years, is still on the job, endeavoring to lift the sights of men in industry, on the golf course and wherever else he serves.

Terre Haute has proved that she is vitally interested in her "youth in the spirit, mind and body," by boosting and building a new Y. M. C. A.

With the building of the new Y. M. C. A., and the revival of the movement and program in the past fifteen months, a dream of many years' duration is finally coming to realization.

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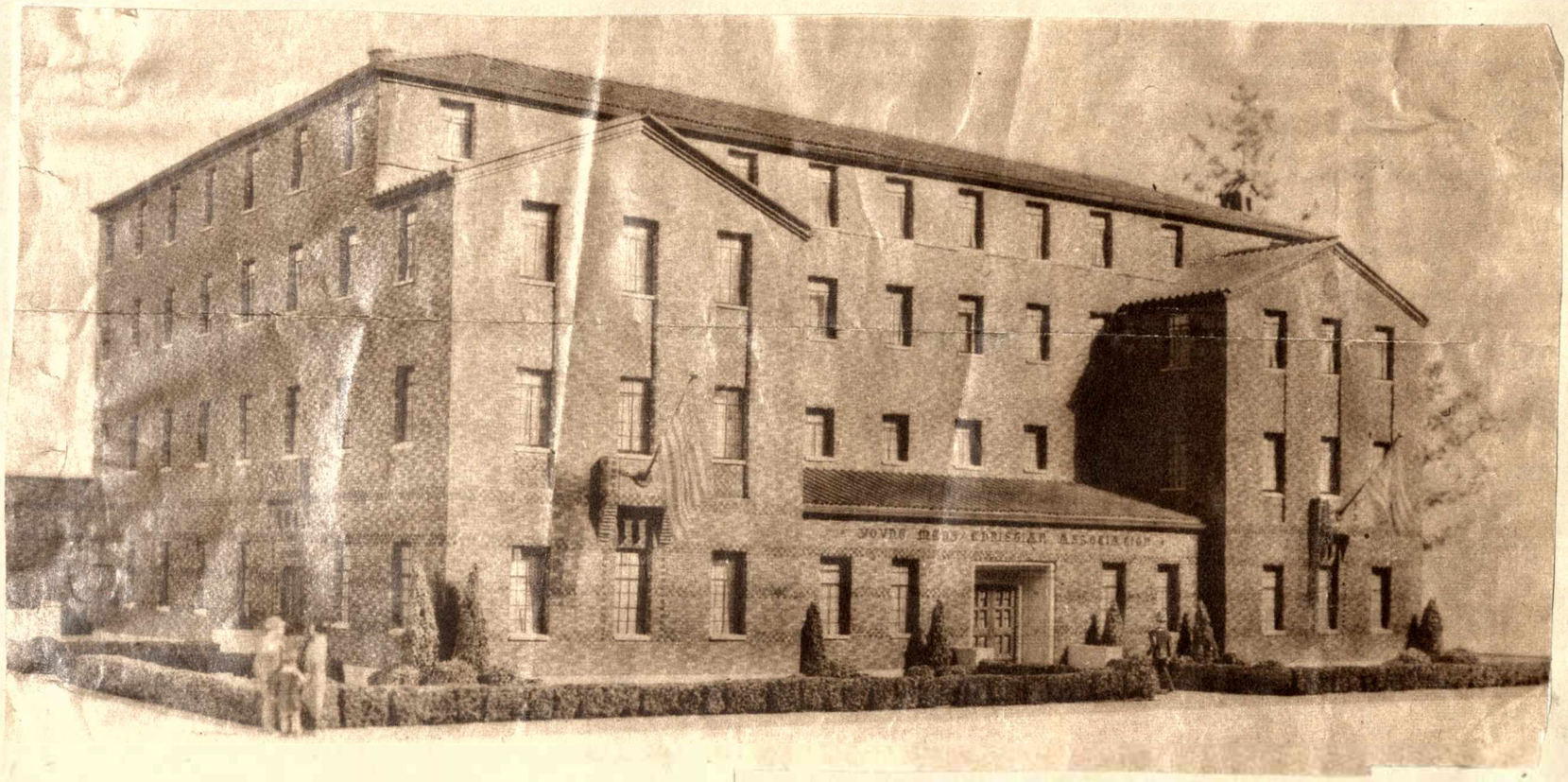

MODEL OF THE NEW YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION BUILDING—This model of the proposed building at Sixth and Walnut streets was made by Al Vrydaugh and is an exact replica of the new building.

YMCA

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Establishment Of The Y.M.C.A. Dates Back To Days In The 'Sixties

By A. R. Markle.

The Young Men's Christian Association was first formed in Terre Haute in January, 1867, after a campaign of several years in an attempt to unite all the religious and social organizations in the movement. The efforts were seconded by a state organization but no real leader was obtained until in late 1866 when several of the leaders in the various churches got together and organized an association along the pattern of the state body. As the title indicates, Jews, freethinkers, agnostics or atheists, though not specifically named, were barred as associates. In January the organization was completed and officers and managers elected out of a variety of the sects in the city.

First Officers and Managers.

Oliver Bartlett was chosen president, E. M. Walmsley, vice president; J. E. Saxton, corresponding secretary; John M. Gordon, recording secretary, and Charles C. Oakley, treasurer. In an attempt to weave together a strong body representative of churchmen, the board of managers was chosen with a representative from each of the churches participating in the movement and this included the following: Fred A. Ross of the Congregational church, A. B. Salsich of the Baldwin Presbyterian church, J. M. Olcott of the Centenary Methodist church, W. D. Gossett of Asbury M.E., P. Grubb of the German M.E., W. W. Byers of the First Presbyterian, William H. Wiley of the Christian church, C. H. Crosby of the First Baptist, W. H. Valentine of the Society of Friends and George C. Duy of St. Stephens Episcopal church. The constitution fixed the time of the monthly meetings as the second Tuesday in each month and the annual dues as $2 for active members, $2 for associate members, while a life member was to pay $20. Rooms were secured over the National State Bank at Fifth and Wabash and the reading rooms were supplied with a number of English, German and American papers and magazines. The use of these was free to all who wished to use them and in later years the upper floor was fitted up with a fairly complete gymnasium, the apparatus acquired from a gymnasium that was located at the corner of Fifth and Ohio which had but a short life.

The Founders.

Of these men, Bartlett was a printer and book binder, Walmsley dealt in furniture and carpets, Saxton sold dry goods, Gordon taught school, Oakley was later a clerk, then partner in the firm that founded the Root Store, and in his latter years was editor of the Express, and Fred Ross engaged in real estate and became mayor of Terre Haute. Of the managers, Olcott was secretary of the first board of the State Normal School, and George Duy was senior warden of the Episcopal church and a prominent merchant.

A New Organization.

This first association was short lived and in 1875 a new one was formed with Isaac H. C. Royse, president; Henry Greenwalt, vice president; Charles Conn, secretary, and J. D. Mitchell, treasurer. Three years later they had a membership of 120 and a library of about 300 volumes. The reading room was free and was open from 8 a. m. to 9:30 p. m. Of these men Mr. Royse was the founder of the building and loan system here and was the head of the organization that founded the Terre Haute Trust Company and erected the building now the home of the Merchants National Bank at Seventh and Wabash. Henry Greenwalt was principal of the old First Ward School at Fourth and Mulberry and Charles Conn was with the First National Bank. The rooms in the National State Bank building must have been vacated, for at the opening of school the students of the old First Ward School were, in part, transferred to these rooms while the present building at Fourth and Mulberry was being constructed, the old building having been demolished soon after school was dismissed.

The Third Association.

About 1890 there was felt to be need of a larger organization and in 1892 a move was made outside of, or in succession to, the old body, a few men met, following a revival meeting at the new Washington Avenue church, a group led by Dr. Ball, C. B. King and Charles Ryan organized and asked the state organization for a charter That body refused because all of the proposed members were of one church and they sent C. B. Jamison here to try to set up a more representative society.

Starting September the work was more successful and in December articles of association were filed with the county recorder, incorporating the Young Men's Christian Association of Terre Haute.

Those named as directors, Henry P. Townley, Moses H. Waters, William H. Wiley, C. Bird King, Robert H. Hollingsworth, James R. Duncan, William H. Barnhart, Jacob A. Parker, Fred A. Reckert, James W. Landrum, J. Smith Talley and Myron A. Hunt. In a sort of modification of a hitherto unwritten rule as to membership, the fifth article declared that "no person shall become a director or an active member of this association who is not a member in good standing of Protestant Evangelical church in Terre Haute and any director of active member ceasing to be such shall thereby forfeit his office and membership in this association."

Section six further stipulated that the corporation might enact a constitution and by laws for the purpose of further carrying out the objects and purposes of the organization but "that no change should ever be made either in these articles of association or in the condition of membership required by article five." Directors were named and in the election of officers, Henry P. Townley was named "chief engineer." To erect the present structure and form a new corporation, articles five and six were dropped from the new association.

Community Affairs File

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Community Affairs File

YMCA has come long way since 1889 founding

By Frances E. Hughes

Two attempts to organize a Young Men's Christian Association in Terre Haute were made in 1889.

One was by members of the Washington Avenue Presbyterian Church, with Dr. C. T. Bell, C. Bird King and Charles Ryan, who met in the office of C. A. Orman at the southwest corner of Seventh Street and the first alley south of Wabash Avenue.

The other was under the direction of J. D. Bigelow, W. H. Barnhart and Frank D. Blue, who met in Bigelow's office across the street.

Both groups finally held a meeting together in September of 1892, when E. E. Stacy, state YMCA secretary, was called here. The two merged and incorporated Dec. 1, 1892. Officers elected were H.P. Townley, president; J. W. Landrum, treasurer, and W. H. Barnhart, secretary. Directors elected were J. S. Talley, J. R. Duncan, M. A. Hunt, W. H. Wiley, F. A. Reckert, R. H. Hollingsworth, C. B. King, W. H. Waters and J. A. Parker.

C. B. Jamison was named general secretary, and Fred Barnes, physical director.

The first YMCA was opened Dec. 20, 1892, in a new building constructed on the northeast corner of Seventh and Ohio streets. A five-year lease was obtained from Samuel T. Reese for the occupancy. At the end of the lease, Reese gave the building to the association. The building had cost him $16,000 to build, and later it was sold for $50,000.

There were 350 members of the Y when it was started.

When the Terre Haute Club voted to disband in 1902, Jamison negotiated a loan from Demas Deming and bought the Terre Haute Club property for the Y. This property on the north side of Ohio Street at Sixth and One-half Street (Spectator Court) was built by Ezra W. Smith as his residence and was considered one of the finest houses in town.

Most of the stockholders donated their interests in the club to the association, and Talley was head of a subscription list with a $5,000 donation to complete the payment on the property and build a new gymnasium there.

Talley was not the only one who donated generously for the project. For instance, Charles W. Minshall and his sister gave $2,000; W. R. McKeen gave $1,000 and there were other large donations.

In 1903, the Y moved into this building, which it occupied for nearly 15 years. In 1919, the building was repaired and remodeled but in January, 1936, it was in bad condition. Consequently, the state authorities condemned it and it was closed.

A survey of the needs of the YMCA was made by Ross Harriott, who had been secretary of the board and was elected board president. The committee recommended that a new site be purchased and a general secretary be hired.

Deming Wheeler started a building fund with a $5,000 donation and the property on which his home was built was sold to the Y for a new home in March of 1937. This was the property where the building now stands on the southeast corner of Sixth and Walnut streets.

The movement for the new building was headed by William H. Mead, Youngstown, Ohio, who was hired as the general secretary and director. "For You, For Youth, For Terre Haute," was the theme of the campaign for funds for the new building. In only 10 days, $200,000 was raised, and the next year the new building was completed.

Mead served the Y as director until 1941. The next director was M. H. Tofsted, who served from 1942 to 1951. The present director, C. F. Wightman, came to the Y in 1952.

Presidents of the board of directors, most of whom served for one year have been Omer Rhodes, Dr. D. B. Prentice, W. A. Sills, Walter W. Talley, who served for five years; Charles C. Newlin, Edward Baur, three years; William (Roy) White, Robert J. McPeak, Paul H. McKee, Ted Bauer Jr., Guy J. Kornblum, Ted Rich, and Clyde W. Andrews, all for two years; Victor Aldridge, Harold Miles, John Hartmann, Arch Dunbar, and the present president, Harrold Pound.

With the opening of the new YMCA in 1940, the majority of activities were centered around the adult community which comprised approximately 90 per cent of the total program.

Also, Y staff time was almost entirely devoted to adult programming until 1950.

Youth activities comprised only about 10 per cent of the total picture and was limited to Saturdays and some week day activities. For instance, activities for youth under 18 years included swims on Saturday only, no known gym periods for children, Saturday night Youth Club, Junior and Senior high schools; Camera Club and Model Airplane Club for boys.

During that time, adult activities included daily swim classes and open times, lifesavings for ages 15 and older, physical fitness for men, handball for men only, church and industrial basketball leagues, weight training and daily classes and team play in volleyball.

During the period from 1950 to 1960, the adult program remained the same but there was more accent on youth. With the hiring of a full time youth director, the youth program began to grow.

Added to the program for young people were weekly park trips, nature study, picnics, industrial tours, camping trips, gym classes, daily swim classes and basketball. There were also family swims, a swim team and co-ed swims for boys and girls; the Youth Club was retained but lowered to junior high school only. A craft or hobby shop was opened, as well as a large youth game room in the basement of the building. Rifle safety also was started for youth between the ages of 10 and 20, with instruction one night per week.

Updating the program again, there have been additions to the programs both for adults and youth from 1960 to the present. Women have been admitted as members. Racquetball was started in 1970 as a new sport and has been growing rapidly since then. Two courts were added to the building in 1970, paid for by the adult membership. All programs have continued except volleyball and industrial basketball.

The youth program at the YMCA now consists of 100 different activities for both boys and girls ages two through 14. Youth membership has grown from 250 in 1940 to 1,000 this year. From approximately four programs for youth in 1940, the activities have increased to 104 this year.

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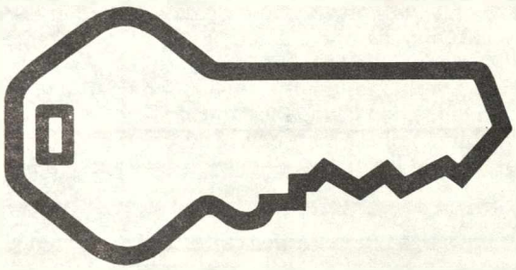
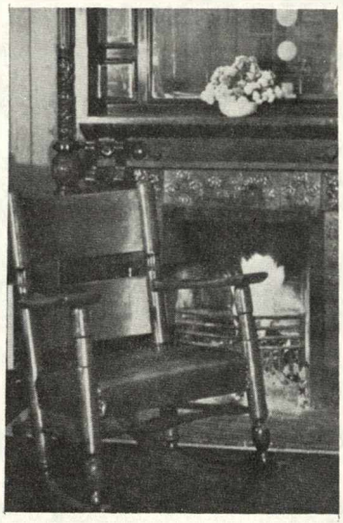


Larry Helman has the key.



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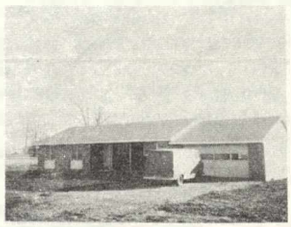

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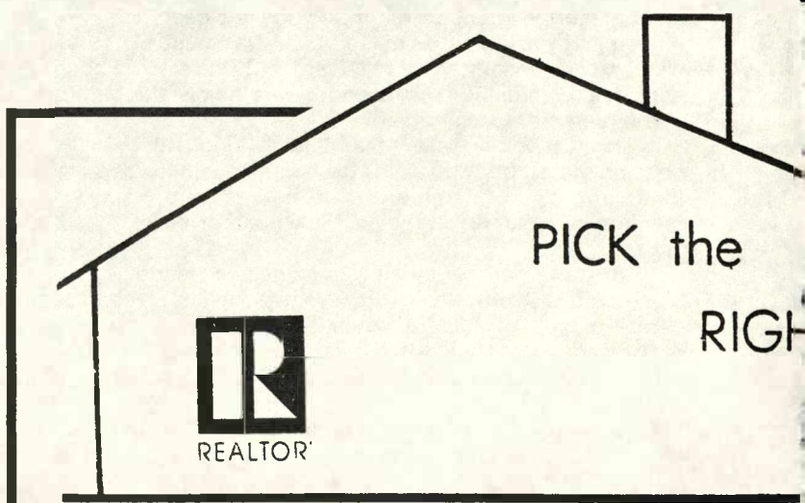

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ANNUAL MEETING

Held by the Board of Directors of the Y. M. C. A.

The annual meeting of the board of directors was held Tuesday evening in the parlors of the Association. The annual reports were presented and returned to the secretary, who will revise them before they are published. The following officers were elected: President, H. P. Townley; vice president, J. Smith Talley; treasurer, J. W. Landrum; recording secretary, J. W. Crook.

The general secretary, Mr. Charles B. Jamison, to whose earnest work is due the remarkable success of the Association, was re-elected for the ensuing year.

A list of committees was appointed for the various branches of association work. These committees and their chairmen are: Finance, Bertis McCormack; membership, Dr. W. C. Eichelberger; gymnasium, Dr. M. H. Waters; social, William P. Felver; lecture course, W. H. Wiley. An auditing committee was appointed with Messrs. J. W. Crook and B. W. McCormack members. Mr. W. S. Roney was appointed to have charge of the religious work. A committee was also appointed to meet and co-operate with the committee appointed Monday evening at the dinner given by Mr. Talley. The committee is composed of Trustees W. R. McKeen, John Cook, J. Smith Talley, H. P. Townley and J. W. Landrum. These two committees will consider the plans for the association to pursue for the year, and the question regarding the improvements on the building.

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The Gazette, Terre Haute, January 26, 1897

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VERTICAL FILE

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11-21-48

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